

DO PHYSICS.

BE ANYTHING.

UNC PHYSICS

Don't Believe It?
Ask Chris Nickell.

Chris Nickell has a bright
idea for David Harris.

Chris Nickell is not here to sing the praises of physics,
but he could if he wanted.

A sophomore from Pittsburgh, Pa., Nickell has the unusual double major of vocal performance and physics. But to him it makes perfect sense.

"I sing to communicate. I do physics to discover," Nickell said.

And there was a point when his love for science and theater recently intersected. The play was the "Laramie Project" and the challenge was to make it rain.

"One of the scenes just begged for rain — and this was a black box theater," Nickell said. "I thought, all I need is PVC pipe, a drill, a saw and a water source. It led to all sorts of questions about how big of a hole to make, and the volume of water needed on the cat walk so it would rain for two minutes. It was one thing to see it, but another to hear it, too. A lot of people in the audience cried."

Nickell's high school didn't offer physics, so he taught himself. Advanced Placement (AP) physics was "easy" and he scored a 5 on the Calculus "C" AP test. But the Morehead-Cain Scholar doesn't rattle off his achievements to brag.

"I can prove to you that almost everyone can do physics," Nickell, who tutors six students, challenged. "I tell people 'Don't look for a formula in the book, build on what you know and go from there.' And then when they get it, I say 'Now explain to me what you did in your own words,' and everyone seems to be able to remember what they learned better, so they can apply it the next time."

So, if you ever need help with your physics...

If you want to ask someone about
studying physics who knows, contact
Chris Nickell at cnickell@email.unc.edu.

Check out

[http://www.dctech.com/
physics/features/0500.php](http://www.dctech.com/physics/features/0500.php) or

[http://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=hmB3UEZBkI4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmB3UEZBkI4)

to see how physics and rain relate.

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